Smart Specialisation Platform: focusing activities on trans-regional and transnational cooperation

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The S3 Platform was established by the European Commission to provide professional advice to EU countries and regions for the design of their research and innovation strategies for smart specialisation (RIS3).

**S3 Platform Members**  
*(October 2014)*

- **153** EU regions  
- **15** EU countries  
- **2** non-EU regions
Methodological Guidance
The latest version is available from the S3 Platform website:
http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu

PART I: THE POLICY CONTEXT
PART II: THE RATIONALE
PART III: RIS3 DESIGN IN A NUTSHELL

Annex I – A step-by-step approach to RIS3 design
Annex II – Delivery instruments and horizontal approaches
Annex III – Guidance for expert assessment
European Commission guides related to S3
http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/guides
Transnational Cooperation

Methodological Guidance

Country- and Macro-region events and targeted seminars at IPTS
Macro-regional cooperation: S3 for Danube

http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/danube-macroregion-activities

Smart Specialisation is a concept that can make a valuable contribution to the integrated approach which macro-regional strategies such as the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR), in the sense that it can stimulate the knowledge and innovation ecosystems within the Danube region.
The Baltic Sea Region

- April 2013: Vantaa

- November 2013: Malmö
  - **Getting Smarter together in the Baltic Sea Region**
    - eHealth, Smart Cities and Open session
    - Results: 12 working groups on concrete proposals

- Dec 14: Vilnius, Lithuania
  - **Connecting RIS3 in the Baltic Sea Region**
    Health Technology, Smart Cities, Food-technology and agro-innovation, ICT and open session
    Aligning EUSBSR PA Innovation and Connecting the RIS3

- 2015: Tallinn, Estonia (tbc)
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Peer Review workshops & trans-national learning
S3P PEER REVIEW METHODOLOGY

http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/peer-review

BUILDING COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

Facilitate transnational learning

- Participants switch roles (regions/countries get to be peer reviewed as well as to provide feedback to other regions/countries)
- Identify shared objectives – possibilities for collaboration
- Improved basis for learning, exploring, development and implementation
- Integrating knowledge from a variety of sources: peers, invited experts, European Commission services

Stimulate the emergence of critical friendships

- Learning together and from each other
- Overcome challenges together
- Build shared cognitive frameworks – common understanding
Peer Review – from 2012 to 2014

- 47 regions and 16 countries have been peer reviewed
- 144 regions (and countries) have participated to at least one workshop
  - Representing 27 MS + 2 non MS
  - Over 50% of regions have been to more than one workshops
  - Over 1/3 of regions have been to 3 or more workshops

An average S3P peer review workshop is organised over 2 days:
- 50-120 participants
  - From 20+ various regions
  - 4-7 regions participating for the first time
- 4-5 Members of S3P Staff
- 2-3 Invited experts
- 1-2 EC representatives
S3P Peer Review workshops

1. Workshop in Seville (Jan 2012)
2. Workshop in Seville (May 2012)
3. Workshop in Ponta Delgada (June 2012)
4. Workshop in Pisa (Sept 2012)
5. Workshop in Strasbourg (Dec 2012)
6. Workshop in Palma de Mallorca (Feb 2013)
7. Workshop in Brno (March 2013)
8. Workshop in Vaasa (May 2013)
9. Workshop in Budapest (June 2013) NATIONAL
10. Workshop in Faro (July 2013)
11. Workshop in Crete (Sept 2013)
12. Workshop in Potsdam (Nov 2013)
13. Workshop in Riga (Feb 2014) NATIONAL
14. Workshop in Novi Sad (April 2014)
15. Workshop in Portorož (May 2014) NATIONAL
16. Workshop in Dublin (July 2014) NATIONAL

More to come in 2015

http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/peer-review
# S3 Peer Review Methodology

- *a tool for mutual transnational learning*

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<th>Phases</th>
<th>S3 Methodology elements</th>
<th>Some Experiences</th>
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| Preparation | Templates and deadlines  
Self-assessment  
Support | + Push process forward  
+ Awareness raising  
+ Stakeholder engagement  
+ Genuine self-assessments/reflections |
| Workshop | Group discussions  
Assessments by experts and peers  
Key insights  
Community of practice | + Opportunities to network  
+ Mix of countries/regions,  
+ Mix of peers, experts and EC staff  
+ Feedback from experts and peers  
+ Informal and trusted environment  
+ Participatory approach - Facilitation the key to success |
| Follow-up | Data-triangulation  
Feedback reports | + Legitimacy  
+ Internal/External Dissemination  
+ Attention to new elements  
+ Further assessment  
+ Further follow up |
S3 Peer Review Approach

The peer-review workshops bring together regions to discuss ways in which RIS3 can be developed. They are held in an environment where practical and conceptual challenges and experiences of individual regions can be shared and debated, allowing regions and countries to peer-review each other’s work and help others to discuss common issues related to RIS3.

Each region or country under review presents a draft RIS3 Platform. One version of such template can be found here. The template covers main aspects of the RIS3 Platform for review.

Further information about these peer reviews can be found in here. The S3 Platform team (M. Midtkandal and R. Rakhmatullin) has compiled a working paper describing this newly developed methodology.

Most documents submitted by the regions (mainly RIS3 and any background material) can be found here.

Peer-Review Workshops in 2012 and 2013
In 2012, a total number of five peer-review workshops were organised. In 2013, a total number of seven peer-review workshops have been held.

Peer-Review Workshops in 2014

Peer-review workshops

PAST EVENTS:

Peer Review 3-4 July 2014
Peer reviewed countries:
- Bulgaria
- Ireland
- Poland
- Romania
- Slovakia

Peer review 15-16 May 2014
Peer-reviewed countries:
- Croatia
- Slovenia
- Cyprus

Peer review 10-11 April 2014
Peer reviewed regions:
- Vojvodina (RS)
- Northeast Romania (RO)
- Weser-Ems (DE)

Peer review 25-26 February 2014
Transnational Cooperation

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Country- and Macro-region events and targeted seminars at IPTS

Peer Review workshops & transnational learning

Thematic workshops & working groups

Extra support for digital agenda and ICT sections of RIS3
Horizontal issues & policy delivery instruments

- Green Growth: Eco-innovation & Energy efficiency
- Digital agenda: enabling knowledge flows throughout the territory (connected regions)
- Clusters for regional growth
- Innovation-friendly business environments for SMEs
- Public sector innovation
- Stronger focus on financial engineering
- Public Procurement for market pull: pre-competitive PP to open new innovation friendly market niches
- Lifelong Learning in research and innovation: support knowledge triangle (KICs) and university-enterprise cooperation
- Key Enabling Technologies (KETs): systemic potential to induce structural change
- Research infrastructure/centres of competence
- Creativity and cultural industries: innovation beyond technology and outside manufacturing
- Social Innovation: new organisational forms to tackle societal challenges
The Stairway to Excellence (S2E) project is centred on the provision of support to enhance the value of two key European Union (EU) funding sources for research, development and innovation (ESIF and H2020) by actively promoting their combination.

The project has two main objectives, namely:

1. Providing of assistance to regions and countries that joined the EU since 2004 (EU13 – New EU Member States) in closing the innovation gap, in order to promote excellence in all regions and EU countries;

2. Stimulating the early and effective implementation of national and regional Smart Specialisation Strategies.

Launching conference (2-3 October 2014):

http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/launching-conference
Digital Agenda

The Europe 2020 strategy has recognised the enormous potential of the Digital Agenda for Europe (DAE) one of its seven flagships. It promotes inclusive economic growth through the realisation of the full potential of the internet and the user-generated content, and the realisation of the opportunities for innovation of fast and ultra-fast internet access.

The development of a chapter for digital growth within the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA) to support ICT investment relevant to their specific territory, by leveraging on the implementation of the Digital Agenda for Europe (DAE). ICT uptake and its impact in the context of the RIS3 priority setting exercise and the RIS3 implementation.

The S3 Platform, together with DG CONNECT and in close coordination with DG REGIO, provides support to national and regional policy makers to succeed in their RIS3 and related EU cohesion policy operational programme objectives. This contains in the S3 Platform, working with ICT actors, a broad range of stakeholders and regions, to provide the political and technical leadership to digital growth.

The Digital Agenda Toolbox

Digital Agenda Toolbox

In the Online Section of the Digital Agenda Toolbox, there is both a downloadable version of the toolbox and links to specific subsections with more elaborate information on specific DAE themes.

Upcoming events

On 26-27 November 2014 the European Commission in cooperation with the Region of Lombardy organize a high level event on Innovation Procurement in Milan.

The event provides an opportunity to discuss...
Thematic workshops
http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/thematic-workshops

Past workshops

**How to Successfully Develop and Implement your RIS3 Priorities** in Norrköping, East Sweden on 1-2 April 2014, [link](#)

**Get smarter together in the Baltic Sea Region** in Skåne (SE) on November 6th and 7th 2013. More info: [link](#)

**Smart specialisation for rural innovation workshop** hosted by the Centro region of Portugal on the 21st - 23rd of October 2013. [link](#)

**Social innovation**, including a special session on smart specialisation organised by the S3 Platform on 28th of June, 2013. Read more [here](#).

**Seminar on Research & Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS3) and Transnational Cooperation for an Innovative Danube Region** in Brussels (BE) on 26 April 2013. [Link](#)

**Key Enabling Technologies (KETs) for Smart specialisation strategies (RIS3) in Agro-food** on April 11-12, 2013, in Murcia (ES). Further information [here](#).

**Pilot workshop on priority setting and collaboration in RIS3 within the thematic area of ICT** on the 9th of April 2013 in Seville. More information can be found [here](#).

**Workshop on the Role of Universities in Smart Specialisation** in Feb 2013 in Seville (ES). Please find further information on the workshop [here](#).
Peer Review workshops & trans-national learning

Benchmarks and targeted support

Interactive tools, S3 Newsletter and Website

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Thematic workshops & working groups

RIS3 assessment and support to REGIO desks
S3 Tools: Regional Benchmarking

http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/regional-benchmarking

This is a new interactive tool for Regional Benchmarking which helps identifying structurally similar regions across Europe with a simple click.

The tool has been developed by the S3 Platform in collaboration with Orkestra-Basque Institute of Competitiveness, and will be progressively equipped with additional links and functionalities aimed to improve integration with other S3 tools and with the dedicated pages that have been produced for each of the regions and countries registered in the S3 Platform.

Interactive tool

Finding reference regions based on

A key to build sound innovation strategies for smart specialisation areas is to identify opportunities for learning policy lessons and transferring practices. But what are the regions one should consider as a reference for these purposes? One way to approach this challenge is by identifying regions that share similar structural conditions and innovation-driven development (social, economic, technological, institutional characteristics). That is, characteristics that cannot be easily changed, but that are demonstrated to affect the way innovation and economic growth are achieved in a region. Below you will find an interactive tool that allows you to search for similar regions across Europe based on a methodology jointly developed by Orkestra-Basque Institute of Competitiveness and the S3 Platform.

Interactive tool

How it works

1. Select a region in the top window
2. Choose the number of reference regions you want to be displayed
3. Press "refresh" to get the results
4. A list of regions will appear on the right side of the screen sorted in descending order from the ones that are more similar (top) to the less similar (bottom) to the region selected
5. The order is given by a synthetic index

Note: Lower index value = region closer to the selected region
Eye@RIS3 – an online database of RIS3 priorities

- to identify their unique niches
- to enable Regions to position themselves in the EU,
- to seek out potential partners for collaboration
  
  - Data from peer reviews, expert assessment reports, and national reports;
  - Additional data can also be uploaded, and any existing entries can be edited;
  - Categories are not perfect matches, but allow to understand how different regions focus their priorities.

Current status (October 2014):

EU Countries with encoded RIS3 Priorities: 20
EU Regions with encoded RIS3 Priorities: 142
Non-EU Regions with encoded RIS3 Priorities: 3
Non-EU Regions with encoded RIS3 Priorities: 17
When these results are cross-checked with the Regional Innovation Scoreboard, one would notice that all types of regions aim for KETs (from leaders to modest performers).
NEW!

- Benchmarking and targeted support
- Transnational Cooperation
- Methodological Guidance
- Country- and Macro-region events and targeted seminars at IPTS
- Peer Review workshops & trans-national learning
- RIS3 assessment and support to REGIO desks

Research and analysis

- Interactive tools, S3 Newsletter and Website
- Thematic workshops & working groups
- Extra support for digital agenda and ICT sections of RIS3
A Policymakers Guide to Transnational Learning

How can one go from dialogue to a real change?

- From an outsider perspective to self-discovery
- What is your challenge and what is your driver of change?
- Points towards what you need to do in the different S3 steps
- Points out the characteristics of transnational learning that could be particularly useful
Thank you!

http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu

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